July 17 1910

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury.

July 17.

My Billy.

I heard what I expected from Clive - that you are seducing the household of the hitherto respectable Mrs Thomas & that your own lusts are increasing at the same time. Perhaps you find massage conducive to lust. I can imagine it might be. Really what with your cultivation of Sapphism with a Swede at Tunbridge Wells & Lytton's of Sodomism with Swedes in Sweden, which apparently is the breeding-house of vice - you will be a fine couple worthy of each other. When you WK come out. I believe he went to his home yesterday.

But apparently Miss T. herself has a pure & even, to my sceptical mind, slightly sentimental passion for you. I with tears in her eyes, she told Clive how after a winter of discontent you - etc etc. But I will leave Clive to tell you him. self. I had gathered a good deal from her letters to me which always speak of you with bated breath as a privilege & an angel of unselfishness - until I feel my cynical sister's hairs rising down my back & I wonder where your red ears can be concealing themselves. But you are evidently a huge success & I expect to see a troupe of lunies & their keepers dancing attendance on you in the

autumn. Meanwhile. what has happened to us since Thursday? Clarissa has not appeared & I do not [illegible] expect her to be kind enough to do so for weeks. I see it was fatal to take any precautions about her & she will have been frightened off indefinitely. Duncan came to lunch on Friday. as did also Clive's editor. Clive is to begin his editing on the 25th for 3 weeks only. We have seen no one else but Adrian & Saxon who both came to lunch yesterday. They were made to play catch all the afternoon which kept them livelier than anything else could have done but did not lead to much that would interest you - or indeed anyone else. Adrian went back to tea so as to get to Duncan afterwards. & Sylvia appeared here. Mr Milman has been as meek as a lamb about

her plans of independence. It is settled that she is to live by herself in a flat in the autumn.

We are going this afternoon to a farewell tea with Ottoline. They leave England early tomorrow morning. I shall have no scene with her, as I shall not see her alone. I suppose we shall hear tomorrow what Savage has arranged for your doings this week. No doubt you will see Clive at any rate. I wish your headaches would quite disappear. Don't cajole Miss J. too much into letting you do whatever you like. I have to leave a space so that Clive may insert some variety & therefore I will stop now. Love K.B.

Two Athenaeums, this week's and last, ought to have reached you by now. In this week's I have a little article on D'Annunzio, edited but still amusing, I hope. In Misc. C. too I hope you will recognize the editorial blemishes, particularly the short penultimate paragraph which is entirely spurious. Another compliment or two has trickled in - for me.

VW.

T. PARSON 3.2.73

Clive will get to you soon after 3.30.

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Bloomsbury.

1910

July 20.

My Billy.

You will have a visit from Clive tomorrow, but I suppose you will expect a letter from me too though I feel it to be rather superfluous. You will also have heard of me from Miss Thomas who was I thought very nice & very sensible. I think of course she is a little inclined to lose her head in admiration of you. You had apparently given her some account of a novel you had been reading which had for the first time fully revealed some of your "great gifts" to her. I only fear that you cajole her too much. We talked naturally almost entirely about you &

could you have heard us you would recant your unworthy suspicions & the way in which I abuse you behind your back. I suppose from what Miss T. says that you really are getting better but the process seems to be a slow one. I wish you would quite get rid of the headaches. Evidently in a normal state you might practically never to have them. You might encourage Miss T. to come & see me again if she will. For I bear much more in a talk than I get rid of dozens of letters. When I last wrote to you I think we were just going to tea with Ottoline. It was a melancholy party. She was surprised & Philip looked miserable. I don't know why. Adrian & Duncan came in & did not make matters better. Everything dropped & Ottoline

was too limp to do anything. They had been packing & were to start on Monday morning. so we shant see them again till October. A. & D. came back to supper here. & afterwards we tried to re-create the hysterical merriment that rescued us at Blean one evening when we talked of funeral scenes. but without success. We also raked out some of the many thousand letters that Granny wrote to Mother but they proved dull too. & Duncan left early Yesterday Norton or Hanney as I should call him appeared to lunch. He was fresh from staying with the Waterlows He found Sydney more intelligent than he had expected & Alice inconceivably stupid. It rounded off. Clive left us alone in the afternoon - but you will be disappointed to hear that our talk was value & rather unsatisfactory. He told me he had been considering my char-

after I had discovered some faults. I hoped this might lead to something interesting but as he would not say what the faults were, it didn't. Yes. Of course were enquired after a great deal. But I don't think you had any compliments. He caught a 5 o'clock train so we had not really a very long talk. At 6 in the evening as we were in the Square who should appear but Wathen. He & Harry always coincide but luckily this time they didn't actually meet. He was fresh from Brussels & is staying at the Russell Hotel, having been told that my family is occupying the spare room here. He & Clive went off to the play & I had Marjorie Strachey to dine with me. When she arrived she started by saying "Can you lend me an object? Luckily you had not taken all I possessed & I was able to

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provide me. She had been
with all day & in dire straits
My conversation with her after
dinner would have been
more interesting if she had
not had a headache which
she was afraid would lead
her to a sudden rush to the
basin. So it was she left
early. However, she made me
admission which if true
is interesting. She says she
has at last fallen in love
with a man. She would not
say who. I suppose it may
be Duncan. She sees no hope
of marrying him but would
not say why. She seems
however, still to be in love
with Mr Berenson. For she
told me that when she was
in Florence she had felt im-
mense satisfaction from sup-
porting Mr B. in a jolting
motor car & sometimes touching

her hand. She also told me that both she & Ellie Rendel are very anxious to marry but see no chance of doing so. Neither of them see any marriageable young men. & she feels that she is getting old. She certainly is not attractive physically & I can't well imagine any one marrying her. She made a lot of enquiries about the prevention of babies. a subject of which she seemed to be quite ignorant & which apparently interests her as much as it does Otto Kyllmann. She also told me that she had a theory that Pippa had not married because she fell in love with a consumptive man & they thought it wrong to marry. He is still alive, so my theory that it might be Arthur Melville

is unsound I suppose. I don't think I had any other interesting gossip with her. I didn't hear anything of Lytton who has gone to Sweden today. Duncan came to tea & Adrian came in afterwards, Julian was there of course most of the time so I had not much talk with either. Then Wattie came & stayed to dinner & Henry Lamb also turned up. & now they & Clive have gone off to the Coliseum to see the Russian dancers. I had already seen them & so didn't go. As you see, we have been less isolated for the last few days but I don't know that my company, such as it has been, has led to anything very lively. Everyone agrees that the summer has been a mournful one, whether on account of your disease or

the King's death does not seem to be certain. Of course Clarissa & Co have not added saiety to the scene. But I feel that I really chose the best possible time for her, that is the time when she has least interfered with anything else. I hope she will have a mournful character in consequence. If she's a boy shall I have to call her Thomas in memory of your aisle? You will tell Clive tomorrow I suppose. If you want anything that man can supply. Harry said he supposed I was very lonely without you. What an idea! Clive seems to think the same. I can only suppose that you have told them so & then that they have begun to believe it. Are these remarks too Snowdrian or Nelly-esque? Perhaps they're rather cumbrous. Julian had a picnic with Sophy in Regents Park yesterday. Yours V. S.

July 1910

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury.

Sunday.

My Billy.

You will have heard of course of my visit from Miss Thomas. She held out hopes that you might write to me soon. But I haven't heard yet. Perhaps you will answer this letter if you think it deserving. I are allowed to. Miss T. & I talked of your doings & she was of course very emphatic as to the need of your being most careful this summer. I had expected as much when I heard that your headaches were still going on, even though they seem to be not so bad or so frequent. You will, I

suppose think me too gloomy & perhaps unsympathetic. but really, Billy, I am most anxious that you should realize the importance of getting quite well now. Miss T. hasn't frightened me or in fact said anything which was even surprising to me - I am simply confirmed in my belief in my own wisdom concerning you by finding that she evidently agrees with me. We both think that you might not to look upon yourself as cured by the end of the month - or in fact until you have been in a normal state for some time - 2 or 3 months - that is to say you might start to try to lead an ordinary life until

you have been free from headaches for 2 or 3 months. I feel that it will be much easier for you not to lead an ordinary life during the next 2 months than it can be after that, & that you must let yourself be looked upon more or less as an invalid until October. Of course the best thing would be for you to stay in bed with Miss J. having time to come back to living more by degrees. But anyhow I am sure that you ought to come to London only for a very short time & that while you are back you ought to decide really, strictly by what Miss J. thinks the right way of life for you. Clive says that you think you might do away with her. & she evidently very much wants

you to but is afraid of seeming to press it. I think if you could arrange it, it probably would be a good plan - especially as Adrian apparently has made up his mind to go to some very bracing place on the East coast. He went to see his doctor about his adenoids & he said that he thought they were better & that anyhow he would not operate on them now but would wait to see if they would not disappear still more of themselves. He also said that Adrian was rather run down & had much better go to some bracing place for his holidays. Adrian in consequence is thinking of Sheringham or some such place - which would not be much to your taking I expect. He seems to have made up

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his mind that you had
better be independent of
each other, as I told him
Miss T. thought that you
might like to go to rather a
quiet air. I think myself
that you had much better
not go away together &
that it is really as well
that your diseases seem
to require opposite climates.
Adrian is, I think rather,
pleased at having doctors'
authority to go & be braced,
though I expect he runs a
risk of finding himself in
the company of Wattie, who
will be near him at
Cambridge & will probably
descend upon him out of
kindness. But he may
manage to avoid it.

Mrs. Thomas also said that Savage is apparently so fond of you that he want say anything that he thinks would hurt you (how unlike me.!) I believe the poor old gentleman must be rather demented about you. Anyhow I hope he will come to his senses or that you will know how to make allowance for his madness - for I think it really would be mad to let you run the risk of having another perhaps much worse breakdown for the sake of saving you some not very severe treatment now. I feel sure that Miss I. thinks you would run such a risk if you don't take great care this summer. I know that it is a most fearful bore to

have to go on being careful.
but as I always say till you
are bored to death. How much
worse it would be have to
have that awful summer
at Welwyn over again.
Since I last wrote to you. I
have seen no one but Adrian
& Saxon. & of course Walter.
I have spent most of my time
arranging my family album.
I bought me from your stationer
& have found the making it
it a fascinating employment.
I raked up endless family
photographs & put them all in.
But today Adrian came to
lunch & as it was cold &
pouring we decided to spend
a happy afternoon going through
any others I could find. Once
I really began investigations it
was too appalling. We have
discovered literal hundreds.
& what's to be done with them
I don't know. Adrian also

found that old diary of Stella's from which he read aloud to us the most gloomy & tearful accounts of days spent rushing all over London from Hampstead to Southwark, all by bus & underground, with never a moments pause. How she lived to be 28 I can't imagine. It fills me with horror to think of it.

Julian pres to spend on Wednesday. He has been in a state of bliss over the chocolate hearts you sent him which he has at every day in diminishing numbers. The sheat goes & cream into his mouth when he thinks he has resisted long enough. He is a "baby pelican" at present & very attractive. Clive says he can come to see you any day you like except Thursday. I'm afraid you'll think this a timid letter but you know it really shows effort in me to make myself write such dull & probably ineffective letters. Yours

1910

I haven't taken any more photographs because the light has been so awful as a rule

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Bloomsbury.

July 27.

My Billy.

Quite not to write to me or do anything but try to get really rested. I don't believe you have done anything but lead a most exciting life until the last few days: when, according to Miss Thomas, you do seem to have learnt a little more wisdom. But if you can still get a bad head as the result of a visit from Clive, it is clear that you aren't nearly well yet. So do do be good. Can you make your brain a little

less jerky for a time.
I don't think I have seen
Adrian since I last wrote to
you, but I saw Duncan yes-
terday. & he said that
Adrian hasn't yet settled
when or where to go. I will
tell you as soon as his
movements are certain, but
when I did last see him
he didn't mean to go away
anyhow before towards the
end of next week & I suppose
he is likely to be dilatory
I have seen no one in fact
but Marjorie Strachey, who came
to dinner last night, & this
today, when after coming
back from seeing Julian at
at Paddington, I first had

a visit from Gerald & then one from Sydney Waterlow & a heavy couple. Marjorie had been ill, she said but with what I don't know. She was very talkative & had long arguments with Clive about suffrage etc. The talk was mostly quite impersonal & rather political. She was going off today to spend the summer suffrage-campaigning I asked her to come to Studland. but she probably can't on account of suffrage! She doesn't seem to have been writing at all. but has leapt back into politics & we heard no more talk of the artist-Lytton has arrived in Sweden but that is all the news of him. Gerald was fresh from Hetty Davenports wedding. Who was H. D.? I can't re-

member but seem to have heard of her as one of Gerald's flames. He asked after you & was fat & stodgy. I can't think why he came. But I suppose the wedding was near here. He kept his taxi of course & soon went. Sydney was up for one of those Cambridge dinners. I had him alone for a long time before Clive came in He was amiable but not at all exciting & worked too much. However he brought me some flowers from their garden. He & Alice mean to take lodgings in Studland certainly if they can get them. Henry James is going to America with the William James's soon & probably for ever. He is much better but is said to burst into tears very easily. Sydney & Alice had liked Norton very

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much when he stayed with them. But Alice was sometimes shocked by his cynicism. Poor Alice. He life must be a difficult one. She is now preparing to have the Merediths with twins to stay for the whole of August. She disapproves & rather dislikes Mrs M. because she thinks she has not enough maternal feeling for the twins but Sydney specially likes her. I suppose the truth is that Mrs Meredith is a woman of some intelligence who apparently can be interested in her work as well as the twins. It's a pity Alice couldn't have them instead.

Clarissa shows no signs

of arrival. I suppose now that she certainly didn't start existence at the first of the two possible times & so she really isn't due yet. Great her. Do you call her or anyone else a bitch (Miss Thomas?) I wonder how far your education of her (Miss T.) has got. She says your language is bad but that it might be without having been fully revealed.

Julian was heartless at leaving me & full of joy at the prospect of Seend. He said the other day that it was not the good old fruit he had buried at Studland. He calls a Nylghau a Shaggy. Which seemed to me remarkable intelligence.

going to do. I saw Adrian yesterday. He is still quite vague as to his plans. I also had a visit from George with flowers full of his patronage of the craft boy. No other news. Yours ever V.S.

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Bloomsbury.

July 29 (1910)

My Billy.

What do you mean by this talk of a conspiracy? You really sound to me rather naughty & I am not sure that I ought to give you a good thrashing up. In the first place is it your idea of a rest cure to creep out & ted to watch the other patients. To wander about in the garden with bare legs & to expect to see any visitors & letters that may happen to arrive? It is clear to me that you have been treated at all strictly & I expect that you have taken advantage of Miss Thomas'

agitations about other patients
to get out of all bounds. I
saw that at first you didn't
do nearly all you ought to
have done in the way of food
etc. But I hoped from her
last accounts that you were
now realizing the necessity
of behaving sensibly. From
your own, however, I am
afraid that you deluded
her. As for saying that
you have been hoodwinked,
I don't know what you mean.
It is perfectly true that I told
Miss T. (on a postcard, I think)
that I could get along very
well without a letter from you

So I could! My beautiful English to Miss F. consists in saying "Dear Miss F. I am so glad to hear that my sister is better. I suppose she can't expect her to get well all at once. I do hope she will stay with you until she is really cured - etc. etc." Such expressions may be quaint but I hardly think you would find them either beautiful or inspirational. But I never heard of such a thing as your being allowed to go there for all that. You don't seem to realize that it is a great concession to your peculiarities that you are allowed to have letters at all. Now, seriously Billy, while I quite see the

horrors of your position. it does seem to me that you will land yourself in endless tiresome restrictions & bothers of all kinds if you don't take the thing seriously now. I don't know what Savage has said to you. I haven't seen him myself or heard from him since you first went. But I think Miss T., tho' I quite agree with you as to her being emotional etc. is also very sensible & intelligent & does understand your health & constitution generally very well. I expect that Savage does too. but evidently he has either been wrong twice — first when he said you would be cured in 3 weeks & secondly when he said you would be perfectly

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well in 4 – or else, as I think probable in the second case, he can't bring himself to order you to do what he knows you would hate. If he isn't in love with you he is anyhow very tender-hearted about you. & you ought to take advantage of that if you want an honest opinion from him. Of course I don't know that you do. But as things are it seems to me that Miss I.'s opinion is of more value than his. I said nothing about your future in my last letter because I thought I had probably said too much in the

me before. My views about it are very simple. I think it is clear that you aren't well yet. If you were, you wouldn't have a bad head all day as the result of 2 hours with Clive the day before. That was only a week ago & it seems to me absurd to expect that you will be so well a week afterwards as to be able to lead your ordinary life without any ill effects. Don't you see that? If you come to London you will lead I think an even more tiring life than your ordinary one. You will always be rushing round here expecting to find

Clarissa - we shall both get very cross & very much agitated - you won't even settle down calmly to an ordinary routine of work, etc. which would be tiring but might be made possible with care. If you must have an interval of London do let it be short: Apparently Miss T. can't go away with you till the middle of August - & my real opinion is that you might to stay with her till a few days at most before that. I suppose you won't & must choose for yourself. But that is my opinion for what it is worth & I believe hers is the same. Now I have been quite frank with you

& at least you cannot feel that there is a conspiracy. What could there be? I don't think you realize how careful you ought to be if you ever want to use your brains freely again. & the only question is how to make you realize that. As Miss T. said to me you are very sensible & seem to understand it for 3 days & then your whole view of the world changes & you think it all nonsense & won't take any care at all. With most people - I quote from her conversation with me - if one once makes them understand a thing it is a permanent gain. & they act upon the understanding in future. But with you the whole process has to be

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some strength periodically. The consequence is that you cant be trusted to act with sense unless you are constantly told of the need for you to do so. As there is so much need now & will be so much for the next 2 or 3 months at least, according to her, it does become very important that you shouldnt be allowed to do yourself harm until you have enough strength to make a certain amount of harm comparatively unimportant. Therefore, we do with much that you ought to be carefully looked after for the

next two months.

But I feel as I did at Canterbury that I can really do nothing. Now that I don't live with you it is impossible for me to be always badgering you ; even if it does land you in a lunatic asylum or make you a permanent invalid. I see that you must be left to your own devices. I have only written all this, which I know will make you very cross, because you seem to think that I am trying to arrange matters for your security. This explosion at least must seem to you open enough!

If it is too intolerable to you to stay on with Miss I. of course you must come to London I don't know how intolerable it is & so can't judge. But I can't help being afraid that you, to escape a short time now of unpleasantness, may run the risk of something far worse. If you do stay on & if Clarissa should arrive meanwhile, you could, I suppose come up & see me for as long as you would anyhow be able to if you were staying in London. As you know, you would only in any case be able to see me for very short, disjointed & unsatisfactory times for the first week or so. at least so it always seemed to me.

Clive would be at work all day, Adrian, I suppose would be away & just going away & everyone else is gone. Now I suppose I have said enough to make you angry & to make myself out a thoroughly unsympathetic character. But use your intelligence, Billy, & consider why it is that we all seem in such a state of anxiety to restore you to health & how willfully we make ourselves unpleasant to you. I suppose (as Miss C. says - the language is not mine) "we cannot help having her welfare very near at heart". As a matter of fact I often wonder why I do ask myself in the subject, but I suppose you have that effect. Now don't think it necessary to answer this. Ruminate on it & I shall hear what you are

TELEPHONE 6247 CITY.

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Bloomsbury. July 31

My Billy

I didn't know what time it is. I ought to have sent it in before but you won't bless me for sending it now. However as I'm trying to tidy up a little here it is. Norton wants me to go & choose a present for you with him tomorrow. He didn't know in the least what to get. Have you any ideas? If so, let me know by telephone.

I had a visit from Lytton in my bath this evening. They seem to have almost taken a house in Gordon Place & to be rather glad of Stuart's defection.

Yours KB.